

Town of Natick
Council on Aging Board Committee
Community-Senior Center, 117 East Central Street
Monday, January 13, 2020
Minutes

Board Members in Attendance: Andrew Eschtruth, Chair; Judy Keefe, Vice Chair; Connie Pitt, Secretary; Bobbi Ciarfella, Elaina Danahy, Shirley Magnarelli, Karen Oakley, Sal Pandolfo, Sue Peters

Board Members Absent: Judy Sabol

Associate Members Present: Harriet Merkowitz

Associate Members Absent: Elaine Ostroff

COA Staff: Susan Ramsey, Director, Council on Aging

Notes:

1. Andrew Eschtruth, Chair, opened the meeting at 7:00 pm.
2. Public Concerns – none
3. Guest Speaker: Nina Levine, Associate Program Coordinator of Drug Free Communities Grant, sponsored by Natick 180. Katie Sugarman, Prevention Outreach Manager, Natick Health Department
 - a. Natick funded, starting in 2016, health department position to address substance use prevention and outreach. Opioid Task Force formed in 2016. Grant money to fund Nina Levine.
 - b. Natick 180 Coalition formed to address 180 degree spectrum on addiction education, prevention and recovery. Steering Committee includes Police Chief and several town leads as well as a recovering addict. Youth group at Natick High School. High School group starting to reach out to middle schoolers on healthy behaviors.
 - c. Would like to extend outreach to aging adults in the community. Range of issues for aging adults from their own medications, caregiving for grandchildren, etc. Street drugs are much stronger than they were even 10 years ago.
 - d. Materials distributed to educate aging adults on addiction issues from vaping to opioids.
 - e. Information on pain management alternatives to opioids could be helpful. Also how to speak with children or grandchildren without sounding like a lecture. Warning signs to be aware of would also help. Education on what vaping devices look like. Same playbook from big tobacco is being used for vaping to hook the next generation.
 - f. Work with home health agencies to intervene in pain management situations. How to speak with health care provider about pain management. Also help on drug interactions especially with older adults.
 - g. Reminder on the prescription drug disposal box at the police department and sharps disposal at the Board of Health office.
 - h. Medication lock box to protect prescription medications. Realtors are recommending especially before open houses. Pharmaceutical ads are an issue with all the positives and very quickly providing side effects.

- i. Rise of methamphetamines usage is coming up the east coast. Don't focus just on opioids but range of drugs, vaping, etc.
 - j. Want to ensure there is awareness for the older adults in Natick. Education session would be good with possible follow-on to help target more specific sessions. Free food always attracts seniors. Consider a day and evening session. March is a good time to target and copy deadline for Sentinel is February 1.
 - k. NCOA paper noted that there are not standard tools as a screening process.
 - l. Access to services such as local treatment providers. Full time mental health clinician part of Natick police department. Narcan distribution for 2 years now in Natick to families and businesses. Working with the hospital to ensure follow-up. Database of area communities so police can follow-up with post overdose resources.
 - m. How is legalization of marijuana impacting? Should lock up just like alcohol and medications. Have not seen a dramatic shift in surveys to-date. More emergency room of young children especially edibles and vaping. Youth don't perceive it as a high risk.
 - n. Consider including an ad for Natick180 in the Sentinel and/or Common Guide.
 - o. Susan expressed concern that the resource list provided includes the Senior Center and her contact information.
4. Council on Aging Director Report, Susan Ramsey, Director
- a. Update on Pickleball Scheduling analysis – First Pickleball anniversary was held today and kudos to the organizers. Susan looked for additional times for pickleball. One window of opportunity on Mondays 9:30-11 when gym is currently rented, as of July 1 end of contracts. Have other needs for the gym and need 'swing' space. Recreation department has also had pickleball space requests. Need to provide diverse programming. Looked at other locations but concern about managing a remote location for set-up/break down. Set-up and breakdown is done by staff. Winter limits options for pickleball so there is more demand. Andrew Eschtruth and Susan Ramsey will provide a follow-up communication.
 - b. Susan requesting 2022 fiscal budget for additional resources to manage the center for receptionist and building services.
 - c. Susan requested a workgroup to address the COA presence on the Town Website. Lorraine McNally has privileges to update the COA website. Trying to get COA email address. Embed hyperlinks in the Sentinel. Connie volunteered to help. Have Lorraine present website at the COA meeting.
 - d. Other –
5. Chair's Report – Andrew Eschtruth, Chair
- a. Meeting Schedule 2020 proposed
 - b. Social Security Reform – There will be lots of discussion but no actual change expected until there is unified control of the legislature. Last major reform was 1983 that extended age eligibility being phased in now. Unusual election year with no republican position. Trump ran 2016 on no changes to retirement benefits. Democrats try to increase benefits and increase funding. Consideration on credit for caregivers but mostly focused on childcare rather than elder care. Also targeting the over 85 population with the view that resources are running out so benefits should increase. Another targeted increase for surviving spouse. Another target the minimum benefit to index at least with inflation. Switch the Cost of Living index to one that correlates more to senior basket of goods to

determine inflation; for example, weight to healthcare costs. Fund by extending social security payroll tax past the current maximum. Social Security 2100 would increase social security payroll tax rate.

- c. Other
- 6. Liaison Reports
 - a. Friends of the Natick Senior Center – Karen Oakley – Friends Board Meeting- Lincoln Café has new cooks as of January. Board of Health inspected and allowed addition of 1 soup per day and can make omelets again. Annual Meeting is May 7, 2-4pm. Nominating committee is working on a new slate of candidates for June. Two new donations from Natick Rotary and a charitable trust. Cathy Ubaldino working on a website for the Friends. Four events being planned. Concern raised on events being run by Friends directly and relationship between groups.
 - b. Commission on Disability – Elaine Ostroff, Susan Peters –
 - c. BayPath Elder Services – Harriet Merkowitz – Emphasis on finding a new director.
 - d. Affordable Housing Trust – Bobbi Ciarfella – Two parcels of land available for acquisition. Low income is 50% and moderate/affordable is 80% of AMI (Area Median Income).
- 7. Subcommittee/Work Group Reports
 - a. Housing – Elaina reported from the January 10 meeting. Discussion about affordable definition. Brainstorming on 3 Goals- 1) Advocate for Accessory Dwelling Units in Natick, 2) Promote Property Tax Relief programs, 3) Educate on housing alternatives for Natick seniors.
- 8. Board Concerns – none
- 9. Director Concerns – none
- 10. Secretary's Report – Minutes of December 9, 2019 were reviewed. Motion to approve the minutes made by Karen Oakley, seconded by Sal Pandolfo, approved 8-0-0.
- 11. Adjourn – 9:18 pm: Andrew Eschtruth made the motion to adjourn, Judy Keefe seconded, unanimously approved, 8-0-0.

Respectfully submitted by Connie Pitt, Secretary